

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8154

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 06438

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GE, FR, EC

SUBJECT: COUVE DE MURVILLE VISIT TO EAST BERLIN

REFS: (A) BERLIN 5584; (B) BERLIN 5463 (BOTH NOTAL)

1. FRENCH BONN GROUP REP (BOISSIEU) HAS BRIEFED US AND UK REPS ON AN ASPECT OF COUVE DE MURVILLE'S MARCH 21-27 VISIT TO EAST BERLIN NOT COVERED REFTELS. BOISSIEU SAID COUVE DE MURVILLE SAW HONECKER, BUT HIS MOST INTERESTING DISCUSSIONS WERE WITH HIS OFFICIAL HOST, AXEN, WITH WHOM HE HAD TWO LONG CONVERSATIONS.

2. IN THE FIRST CONVERSATION, AXEN STRESSED THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF INNER-GERMAN TRADE, NOTING THAT THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SUCH TRADE HAD BEEN FIRST ESTABLISHED IN 1950. AXEN CITED THE LACK OF TARIFF BARRIERS BETWEEN THE GDR AND FRG AND SAID THAT, DESPITE THE GDR'S FRIENDSHIP WITH OTHER EC MEMBER STATES, THE
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GDR COULD NOT AT PRESENT PAY HIGHER PRICES FOR ITS

IMPORTS FROM OTHER EC MEMBERS THAN IT COULD GET FROM THE FRG. NEVERTHELESS, AXEN NOTED THAT MFN WAS BEING PURSUED IN EC FORA, THAT GERMAN REUNIFICATION IS "LONG SINCE DEAD," AND THAT NOWHERE IS IT WRITTEN THAT THE FRG'S PRIVILEGED SITUATION" IN TRADE WITH THE GDR MUST LAST INDEFINITELY. THE GDR WAS INTERESTED IN DIVERSIFYING ITS TRADE FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

3. AXEN RAISED THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS AGAIN IN HIS SECOND MEETING WITH COUVE DE MURVILLE. HE STATED THE OBVIOUS IN SAYING THAT THE GDR WAS POOR IN NATURAL RESOURCES AND DEPENDENT ON ITS EXPORTS OF FINISHED PRODUCTS TO PAY FOR ITS IMPORTS OF RAW MATERIALS. WHILE THE GDR'S MAIN CUSTOMER REMAINED THE USSR, THE GDR ALSO HAD TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF CAPITALIST WORLD PRICES. EVEN IF INDUSTRIAL PRICES INCREASED IN THE GDR, RETAIL PRICES WOULD REMAIN THE SAME (BOISSIEU REMARKED WRYLY THAT THE FRENCH REPORT SAID AXEN DID NOT REVEAL THE MEANS BY WHICH THE GDR WOULD ACHIEVE THIS ECONOMIC MIRACLE).

4. AXEN SAID THE FRG WANTED THE GDR TO INCUR DEBTS TOWARD THE FRG SO THE LATTER COULD APPLY PRESSURE ON THE GDR. AXEN DISMISSED THIS ALLEGED TACTIC AS A "DAYDREAM." COUVE DE MURVILLE RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT AXEN WAS HINTING THAT, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF AN EC-CEMA UMBRELLA AGREEMENT, THE GDR MIGHT BE READY TO PUT AN END TO THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO GERMAN STATES.
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